

HOME LIFE

of the

PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS

• *The Old Home:*

Food Preserving

Living Room

Folklore

Furniture

Quilting

Lighting

Whipping the Cat



By A. MONROE AURAND, Jr.

Author of

"Little Known Facts About the Amish and the Mennonites";

"Quaint Idioms and Expressions of the Pennsylvania Germans";

"Little Known Facts About Bundling in the New World", &c.

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HOME LIFE



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HARD WORK, LONG DAYS, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER PREVAILED

HOME LIFE IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS was one long series of demands from early morn until much too late in the evening.

The call: "Time to get up!" was given once, and all hands (hired help and kids as well), were expected to be out of bed and at their particular chores in a jiffy. People "got up with the roosters," or before.

The morning chores a generation and two ago were many. The boys and men drew the outside assignments—work with the teams, the barnwork, in the woods and in the fields.

The girls and women found plenty to do in the house—they prepared breakfast, eaten by candle-light, or in later years, the kerosene or coal-oil lamp; or earlier still, the old iron lamp, using grease and cotton wick.

Seen in old time homes were some few framed pictures on the walls, but much more likely such as: "God Bless Our Home;" "Ein Brief so von Gott" (a "Himmelsbrief," or Letter from Heaven, or Letter of Protection); birth, baptismal and marriage certificates and a temperance pledge. Also "Haus Segen," Adam and Eve, Ages of Man, and Roads to H. and H.

Furniture, plain but sturdy; floors covered with rugs of several descriptions, or regular carpet, much of it home-made or of other local origin.

The Bible (family size), was never too far from reach, but a hand Bible, much worn, was probably in the kitchen, or most active room of the house for frequent reading by father or mother.

A catechism was in the parlor, or, if some one was being catechised prior to joining the church, it was near the worn Bible.

An almanac hung near a window for frequent reading, as it was important in those days to know what Saint's day it was, as well as the sign of the moon, etc.

Four to five thousand years ago the moon had a great influence on the lives of those who tilled the soil, as well as others who labored in other fields.

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In times B. C., or in our own era, there have been "witch-doctors," or those who would "chase the devils away." We have them in our own day, just as we have too many people who believe in these "mysterious spirits."

A Home is Managed, operated or run pretty much on a basis of faith, or fear; or a combination of both. The net results may not be appraised in full for a score or two of years, or even longer. Some very good results are evident in the successful lives of men and women who love their Creator, yet who came from homes where they feared "witches," and practised pow-wowing.

Somewhere about the house, but more likely the barn, there might be found nailed up, over, or alongside a door-way, the old familiar mule- or horse-shoe. With the forepart of the shoe uppermost it was supposed the shoe would lose its luck, while if placed with the trough down, like a cup, it would "hold" the luck. All races, creeds and colors have some favorite charm they hold will bring good luck, or suspect something that will bring bad luck.

An almost-always-filled coffee-pot was common on the old cook stove, where it kept warm for hours, particularly in colder seasons.

Cats and dogs were domesticated pets, welcome indoors, if "house-broke." There were outside breeds of both kinds, too. The animals made nice pets for the children, and kept down the rat and mice nuisance.

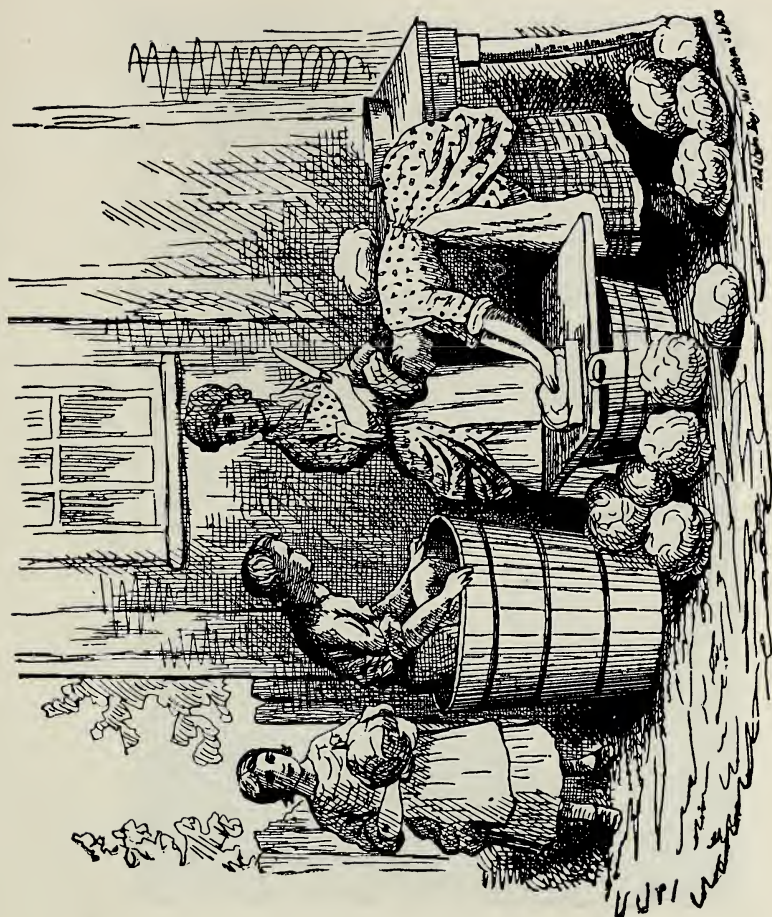
Persons fond of dogs or cats will make good wives or husbands.

If you shoot a cat, you lose your luck, and you may have trouble with horses, and such firearms will not kill after that.

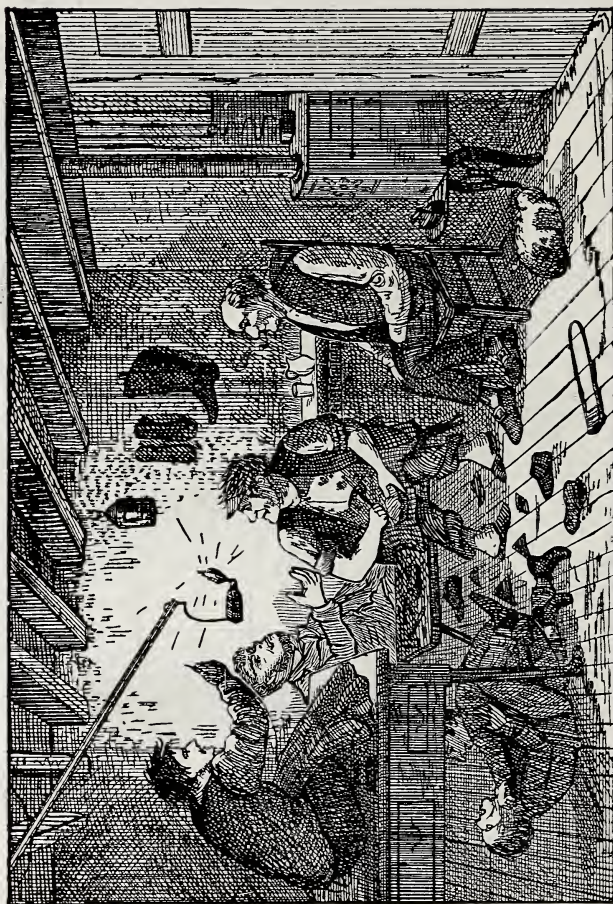
Let a cat look into a mirror, or feed her at night to make her welcome—and she'll stay.

Great pains were taken not to violate the Sabbath day, according to a conception as to what was right or wrong. Then, of course, some sects preferred our common Saturday for their Sabbath, which permitted them to desecrate the other fellows' Sunday.

Friday Seldom Qualified for anything good, stemming from the crucifixion, or hangman's day. If one



Making Sauer Kraut



Whipping the Cat

can interpret the Psalms correctly this portion of the Scriptures will do much to start man out right on certain days, for long journeys, or unusual undertakings.

For centuries the twelve signs of the zodiac swayed the people, and this same influence persists.

Mothers of today beget children who will also know about the virtues of the particular sign under which they came into the world.

Days, months, years, and the four seasons were supposed to be regulated by something that had happened on the first or last day of a week, or month, or something like that.

Take "Candlemas" or Ground-Hog Day, February 2: it runs the weather in Pennsylvania for six weeks after that date; either it will be mild, or cold, according to the ground-hog, who may or may not see his shadow at high noon of that particular day.

St. Swithin's day foretells of rainy days to come, or not to come, for forty days thereafter.

The month of March, if it comes in like a lion, goes out like a lamb, or vice versa.

During the equinox "Mary goes over the mountain"—wet, or dry, and returns in the opposite manner.

The foregoing observations of a home of yesteryear might give one the impression that much of rural life was a belief in and practice of superstitions and such. In the light of modern reasoning some would probably agree on that point, but we must examine the whole people in the civilized world, and compare beliefs and practices, including those of our own most devout and church-going people.

We could probably find so many big and little things other people do that seem as impractical, as, for example, the refusal of a Pennsylvania German to put shingles on a roof in the "up-sign" of the moon; they'll turn up if he does, and he knows it. Science says the moon has nothing to do with the shingles turning up; still they do!

People, and mothers especially, hate to change custom or convention, when it concerns the welfare of life here and hereafter.

For generations home life in rural Pennsylvania has

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been a conglomeration of the customs, faiths, habits and fears of a mixed element of central and western Europeans, including the superstitious conscious English, Scotch and Irish.

But examine the contents of your Old Testament for evidences of similiar beliefs and habits today, and you will find there a wealth of information along just the very same lines we have brought out previously, viz: Christians do have a great share in the belief of things which rational thinkers declare are nothing but "humbug." And there you have something about a subject that will be controversial for a long, long time to come.

LIFE IN TOWN AND COUNTRY HAD MANY RIGORS AND PLEASURES, TOO

In Defining the Home Life of the Pennsylvania Germans in the "good old days," we will make the time element primarily in the late 1800's.

Persons who read this and similar writings are wont to look back to years following the Civil War, when a dollar to \$1.25 a day was the prevailing wage, and a good one at that. Great fortunes were founded in times when a dollar represented the equivalent of a day of hard work for a laborer or mechanic—and the equivalent of a year's income for lots of boys and girls! Fewer attractions away from home in those days; a world's fair, circus day, a balloon ascension. or a chautauqua, constituted a "life" of entertainment.

The marriage rate in the good old days was satisfactory enough, and divorces were scarcely heard of. Families were large, and "help," or labor, cheap. Kids grew up in due time to become farmers, day-laborers, business and professional men, some rather prominent, too.

A Good Deal of Promiscuity Existed between the sexes, and court dockets were plumb full of "f. and b." cases—the short form for "fornication and bastardy." Today there are still a lot of these cases noted in the papers, but they now come under such polite terms as "statutory offense," or "serious offense."

The primary reason for alluding to the foregoing subject is to picture the ways of men and women in days not always too circumspect, and not without sin. Our forefathers and -mothers had many good times, often ending in close calls with the preacher and the law.

But this isn't by any means the story of the Pennsylvania Dutch, or Germans. They were a thrifty people who tilled the soil, worked in foundries and mills, taught school and went into the pulpit. If any farming was done, they were the people who had a firm hand on the plow, and on the scythe.

They Were the People Who Talked Funny—something like this: "Pennsylvania wolunteers went down the walley firing wolley after wolley all in wain." Who cares if they did "talk funny"? They were able to buy up the best farms, or marry their daughters or sons into the families that had desirable farms, and eventually assimilated Scotch-Irish and other races, so that even today the "Dutch" idiom is heard in most of the great southeast and southern part of the state where the Scotch-Irish were the original settlers.

They are the people of "the seven sweets and the seven soures"—and who enjoy molasses on their mush and panhaus—but not sugar or molasses on liver pudding!

The times about which we write were those coming out of the fire-place to the kitchen-stove era; from the candle and iron lamp with the cotton or rag wick, to the kerosene lamp, and primarily before the electric light. We are thinking of the time when white and blue tipped matches supplanted the sulphur match—home-made.

We are thinking of the time when a handful of peanuts and a clear-toy (candy), and a bright, new, shining penny were found under the tree at Christmas time — a tree strung with tinsel and popcorn on a string, and ball after ball of good, buttered popcorn.

We are thinking of the days when a cotton string, bent pin, an odd piece of metal, or lead, and a crooked branch made the real "hook, line and sinker."

The Time Comes when many of us like to do a bit of reminiscing. It is a grand feeling indeed to recall many pleasant memories of childhood days, and the "daring" 'teen age. My, how we looked forward to the next date, or party; the next base ball game; a game of "hasenpeffer," etc.

We also anticipated reaching the age of man, or woman—adulthood, at twenty-one. Most of us have distinct recollections that "age 21" didn't bring any relief from the "trying" life of a minor. It increased our responsibility, and it would be a fine thing if we could convey with success, this costly experience to the generation that is so ill-prepared to pass from the giddy 'teen age to the age of responsibility.

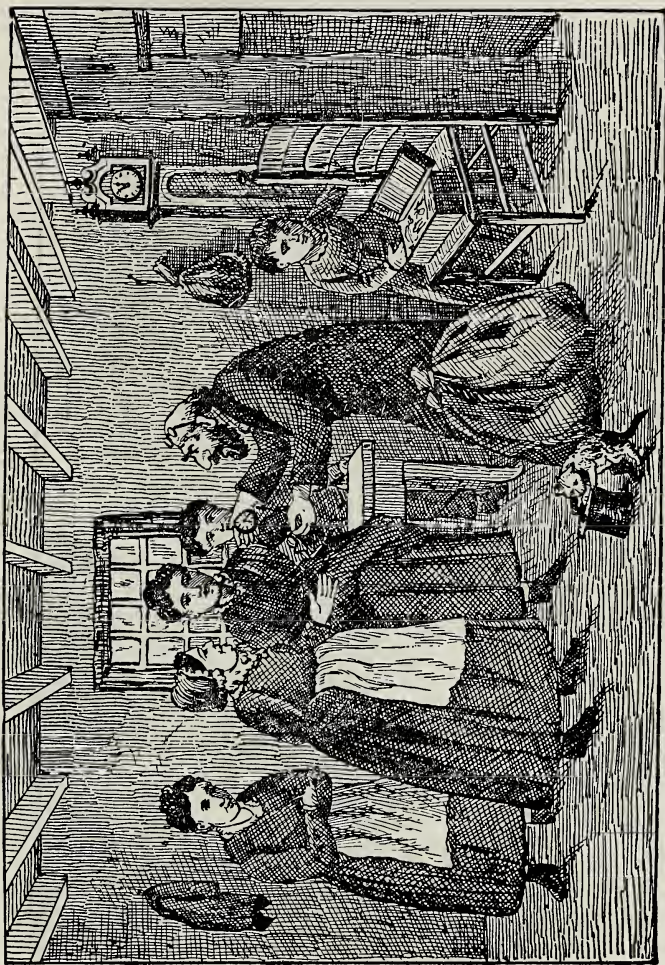
A Jewish boy becomes a man, an adult, at fourteen; a girl at thirteen is already a "woman." Gentiles, following custom and the law for many generations, do not equip their kind early enough in life to meet all the qualifying tests that make for an early success in the business or professional world. There is a difference here of seven years, or one-half of the "active" life of a gentile when he is told: "You are too young, yet; wait until you are twenty-one!" Bad psychology, say we.

We look back to the late nineteenth century, and gather notes from various sources of a rich and abundant life in Pennsylvania German towns and countryside.

We are mindful that the further back we go into the past century the more self-reliant and self-sustaining we find the individual. Thus we are inclined to pay a generous tribute to the artisans and craftsmen, male and female, of the "good old days."

Our Forefathers made and produced the things they used, through sweat and toil; foodstuffs were produced by little better than primitive methods, but they generally had good soil, and they persevered, even on rough hillsides. We should not underestimate the efforts necessary to sustain life in the old days—we, who today are so easily supplied by chain grocers and super-markets.

Birth came, quite often, through the aid of a mid-



Itinerant Merchant



Family Worship

wife; doctors were not always able with a horse and buggy to beat the stork. But emergency preparations, primitive though they were, took care of many such "little ones." Two kinds of milk were generally available—mother's and plain, unpastuerized cow's milk; rarely canned, as is now the case.

Farm folks and many town's people had cattle in those days.

Home-made clothing and nearly everything else home-made greeted the new-born, and these objects are now coming to be real antiques.

For the kids, there were always many chores around a farm, or town home. Just recently a five-year-old girl asked her mother: "Why do parentses always send little kids to the store; why don't the parentses go to the store?"

A boy or girl had assigned to them many duties from morn till night—from gathering eggs, to washing and drying dishes, and washing out "dities."

These duties multiplied every year, and as soon as boy or girl could "put it across" they, too, married, and started still more responsibilities for themselves, and the new brood.

But it was not all work; there were many opportunities for play, and the relaxation in fun of all kinds is reflected in the behavior of boys and girls, and men and women of all ages.

At play there were many innocent games, though some led to danger, even as today.

Children had dogs and cats as home playmates, but many of them were given outright a certain heifer, or steer; poultry, including pigeons; also ponies, squirrels, rabbits, etc. They played with dolls and with miniature dinner sets, so that our mothers had a certain inhibited urge to raise good families and be good cooks and genteel housekeepers from little experiences gained at play. And who did not cut out paper dolls?

Five to Six Years Old and off to school they went, and for many of them long walks, with cold packed lunches. The three r's were basic, and with whatever else they were fortunate enough to get from the teachers (in many cases mere graduates from a poor gram-

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mar school), we note very satisfactory statistical returns of all sorts in the German settled counties of Pennsylvania during the period about which we reminisce. Not long before this time the parents were compelled to buy out of their own pockets, the books the kids used at school. Often they were able to get along with but a readin' and a 'rithmetic book.

The pulsation of the Pennsylvania German folk from the 1840's on through the years following, found the population on farms growing, so that today many Western States owe a generous debt of gratitude to those who left the Keystone State and settled within the borders of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, the Dakotas, Texas, the Pacific slope states, and nearby Maryland and Virginia, and even the Carolinas. Virgin, or larger farms, at low costs, were the impelling influences. Our loss was a great gain for others.

THE ART OF CURING, PRESERVING AND COOKING OF FOODS

Water for Home Use, for drinking, would be obtained from springs, found near the older form of dwelling. Eventually the garden well, or the back-porch, even the pantry pump came into use. This water was obtained from hand-dug wells, and was used for all purposes, if the flow was sufficient.

If there was a lack of spring, or well water, there might be constructed in the cellar a cistern, which caught the rain water, to be used for family washing. In a number of cases tanks were set up on top floors, or attics, and water pumped from cisterns to the tanks, so as to create a natural flow and pressure, and then used sparingly in bath-rooms and kitchens. We said "sparingly," for it had to be pumped by hand, and no one relished the idea of pumping just for fun.

An interesting side-light on the subject of water should be made here. Most Europeans detested and drank but little water. The French drank wine, the English drank ale, and the Germans were always

beer drinkers. Drinks, such as these, are beverages, and as such they must supply the body with liquid.

But in the early days in the settlement of Pennsylvania, water was about the only liquid to be had, except coffee, and milk. Tea and chocolate made an early entry into kitchen and table use; "tea" also caused some trouble for the British! Our Dutchmen, (and the Scotch-Irish), had their cider, in season, and many had access to a whiskey still, and plenty of rye, too.

Foods and Storing.—In planning for the storage of foods in the home much of it had to be cured. This could be done in many instances by drying, salting, smoking, pickling, burying, canning, etc.

In cellars were stored all kinds of foods: apples, potatoes, beets, turnips and parsnips; also barrels or hogsheads of corned beef and salt pork; hams in salt brine, shad and mackerel, butter, pigs' feet, souse, etc. There were tumblers, jars, and crocks of all kinds of fruits and jellies; cider and vinegar.

The attic held smoked hams, bacon, beef and sausages; dried fruit, nuts, onions and tea. Hams could be "buried" in the granary.

A staple food for many Pennsylvania German families always has been, and still is: "coffee soup;" also bread and milk.

Cooking Places.—The old-fashioned fire-place, with its wide chimney, had given way to flat-topped "ten-plate" stoves, as they were called. These provided for a more-controlled way to prepare and cook food.

Eventually we had the better known kitchen stove, or range, with ovens, water jackets, shelves and warming closets.

Cooking utensils were almost invariably iron pots and pans, or some brass, iron or copper kettles. There was tin, too, and we read many cautions not to use vinegar in vessels of that finish. Most of the cutlery, etc., were hand made, much of it locally.

In our day we see very little in actual use of open fire-places for preparation of meals, in the two- or three-room old-fashioned house. The old houses were not cluttered with a lot of pieces of furniture and utensils that were used only on very special occasions.

Sleeping Accommodations.—Not so many years ago the heads of the family, the parents, slept in the kitchen near the fire-place, since it was the warmest room in the house.

As we recall houses of a later era, we find quite often a bed, couch or lounge in kitchens of any size at all, and not far from the stove. Of course, the ever-handy woodbox had a covering of some kind—blankets, or skins to make a soft seat or sleeping-place, at least for the youngsters, or the household pets.

Kitchenware.—We don't suppose there is a single piece of kitchenware, dating back a hundred years, but has its antique value today—and it wouldn't sell in the lowest brackets, either. Take the painted tin, brasses, etc., and you find that there is a very ready market now for them; in fact much tin, or toleware, is being painted today so that we may again in a manner commune with our forebears of a century and more ago.

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE WAS LARGELY OF LOCAL MAKE

Household Furniture may be said to be a true index to the culture and habits of a people—their cooking utensils, farming implements and the like.

The home life of the people of yesteryear differed somewhat, depending on whether they lived in rural, or small town settlements, or larger centers of population. Their religious denominations might have had something to do with the tolerance or certain types of furniture, or ornamentation.

Naturally, there were the "rich and the poor;" the "high and the low." The farmer, particularly if among newcomers to the country, or because of general family traits, belonged to that vast multitude which had little of this world's goods. Yet they found it possible to get along with poor and meager materials.

Writers and students seem to agree that there were two main classes of joiners (furniture) among the Pennsylvania Germans. One type showed a rather distinct tendency toward the styles found in Germany,

which embraced several other traditions. The other seems to have been influenced by English styles as fashioned by the Philadelphia cabinet makers.

The Pennsylvania Germans were good observers and whatever appealed to them could be reproduced with a nicety, and sometimes improved. So it follows that it would not be difficult to fashion many pieces such as reflected old world ideas—none the least being painted “stuff,” such as dowerchests.

In the early days there was unlimited recourse to cherry, maple, walnut, poplar and pine, and sometimes butternut and applewood. So often when we hear someone speak of an old piece of furniture, the word “walnut” is brought in, for black walnut was the popular brand for furniture of the better or more substantial grade.

Painted Furniture.—Pieces most characteristic of the early days included benches, settees, dower-chests and “bride-boxes,” mostly of soft woods.

These had their share of painted decorations, again based on old world motifs, and quite similar to those we find on “fracktur.”

As to the second of the above-mentioned classes, writers say that while the English influence is evident in the local Pennsylvania German manufacture, their workmanship exhibits distinctive trends which lead back to the maker. The P.G. workmanship may not be as elegant, but at least it attained sturdiness and frankness, if not distinction.

The two classes mentioned may well be joined by a third, that of utilitarian—the fellow who, farmer or preacher, might need chairs, tables, cupboards, or chests, and who forthwith proceeded to make what he needed.

Thus we have many varieties of Pennsylvania German, or Dutch, furniture—flimsy, sturdy, crash and attractive—today some pieces alone bringing in as much to the antique dealer as the original maker might be able to earn in cash in a whole year.

Floors. — The homes of these old-timers in the early nineteenth century, up to the 1820's were in sharp contrast to interiors of today.

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Where the floors were of wood, they were sanded—generally the kitchen, living-room and parlor; other rooms were bare. There were no carpets or rugs.

Patterns of various sorts were placed on the parlor floor at regular spacings. Then sand was sifted evenly, the pattern lifted, and the "carpet" was there. Or, following another plan, sand was scattered, or swept evenly, and a stick or other object used to trace a design.

The kitchen got the same type of treatment but not with as much care, for the broom used was probably a birch or splint broom, or hemlock twigs tied firmly together.

Scrubbing brushes were made from cat-o'-nine tails, before they were ripe. While they didn't last long, they were plentiful, and easy to obtain.

Another type of scrub brush was made from birch twigs about as long as a hand, and wrapped tightly from end to end.

Carpets Appear.—It was just over a hundred years or so ago that home-made carpets made their appearance. They consisted of rags, or plaited rugs, and from that time onward carpet-rag parties were current events in almost every home, lasting for all of one hundred years in some communities. The hooked rug, with its many designs and some of considerable size, also made for convivial days and evenings among small town and rural folk.

Wallpapers, such as we now buy at so much per roll, or so much per room, were little known a century ago. The women of that day gave their walls a coat of white wash. While it was pleasing to some, others found various tints, such as pink, buff, or blue, more to their liking—depending largely on the room or rooms in question, and the time of year.

Figures could be added to such severely plain walls by cutting a potato in half, and cutting some sort of design on it, then dipping the potato in white wash or other coloring, and applying it to the walls—an early type of "transfer."

THE COBBLER, THE TAILOR AND TEACHER WERE MIGHTY WELCOME GUESTS

"Whipping the Cat." — A cobbler, or shoemaker, known also as the disciple of St. Crispin, made his livelihood by going about from house to house repairing or making new shoes or boots "on the spot." He carried all the necessary tools in his portable kit, leaving home on Monday, to return late on Saturday, the general rule. The custom was called "Whipping the Cat."

Each family furnished the necessary leather for boot and shoe making, and each small town might conceivably have a tanner's or currier's shop where leather was prepared. Leather was much in use in the house and around the barn, being made from hides and tan bark, obtainable almost everywhere in those days. Numerous tanneries dotted rural sections until the dawn of the twentieth century.

Good quality of leather would be soaked in vats up to three years or longer.

To take the measure of a foot, a person stood up against the wall of a room or hall with heel tight against the mop or base board. A knife marked the tip of the great toe, the foot measured with a splint. Shoes were generally made broad enough, but shape was of little import.

A cobbler could make an average of \$6 a week doing work of this sort. He would get room and board free where he did his work. He might have as company two other very necessary professional men—the tailor and the blacksmith, who likewise went from house to house to create new garments or make repairs.

Another Passing Reference to Shoes: in other years it was not uncommon for some members of a family who might have a good distance to travel to church, to save their shoes from wear and tear by carrying them until near the church, when they would put them on for sweet appearance-sake.

We have seen countless times, septuagenarians and younger persons of the same families, who lived in

town or country, come to the general store, post-office or saloon, in bare feet. They certainly owned leather boots, which they didn't wear in warm seasons, but we wonder if some of them owned shoes. Perhaps those were the fellows who gave us the old saying: "Die with my boots on."

In those "other days" the blacksmith or shoemaker could be called on to double for a dentist or a doctor; i. e., they could pull, or knock out a tooth, or teeth; or, they were equipped with a sharp lance which they used in "blood letting." This bleeding was a very common way of getting rid of illnesses—"that tired feeling"—or sluggish blood, in the spring of every year. Bleeding was common, but was generally reserved for adults; it was called "cupping."

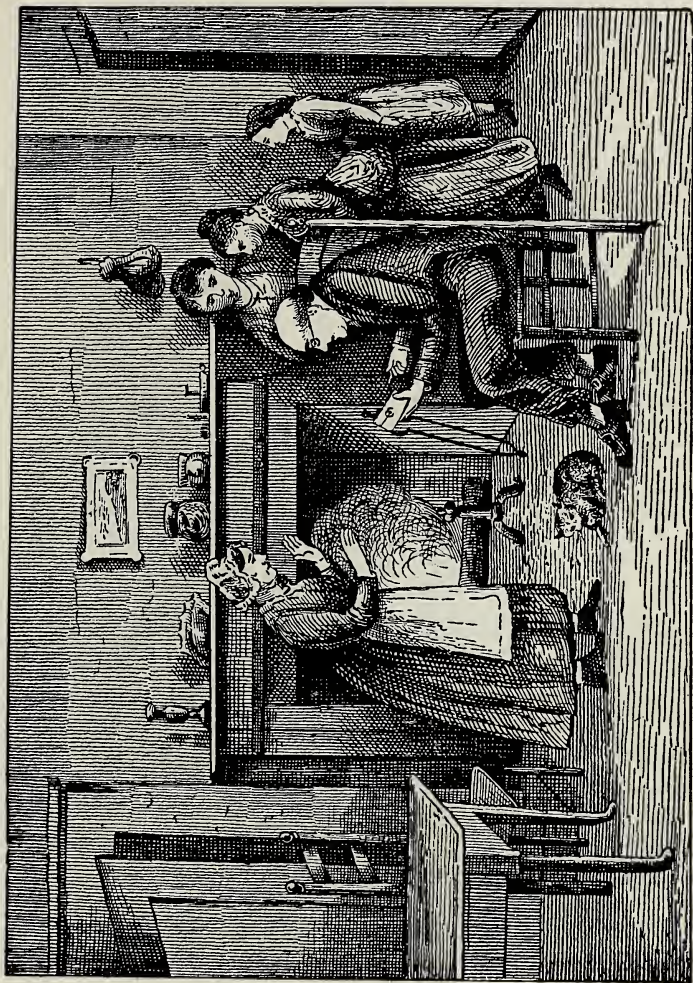
Commentators tells us that these itinerants loved to smoke, tell tall tales, and argue; eat well and loaf. Families feeding "first class" would likely see these fellows stay a day or two, or even days longer than necessary, because of the good meals.

If the itinerant school master, who boarded 'round, happened in when the others were engaged, all the questions of church and state, and morals, too, were thoroughly threshed out.

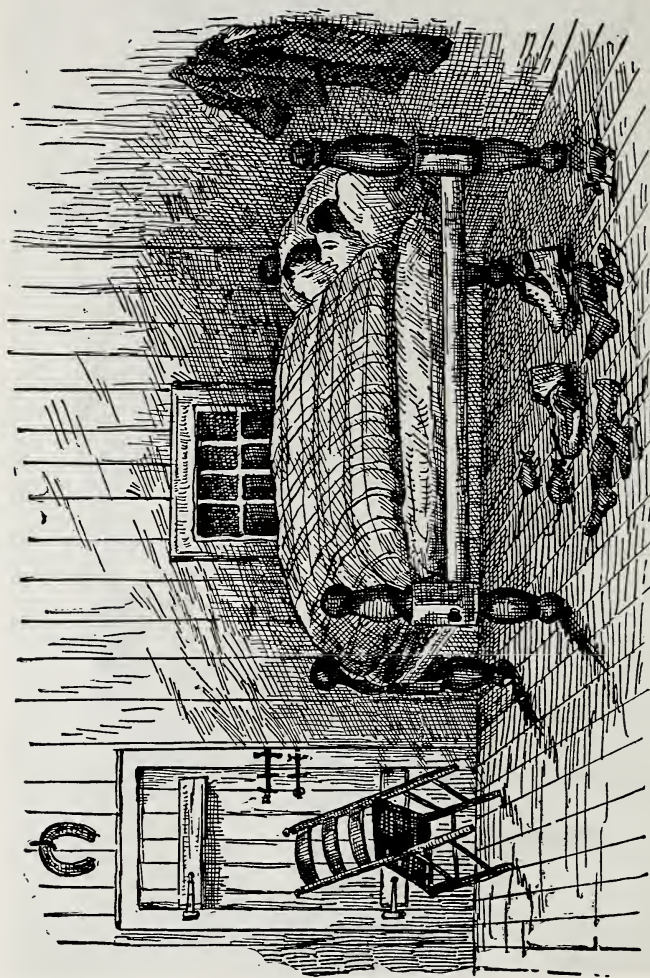
METHODS FOR OBTAINING LIGHT WERE TEDIOUS AND UNCERTAIN

Lighting in Earlier Times was provided through the use of pine knots, candles or betty-lamps. The latter were rather small, and shallow, perhaps an inch or so in depth, and two or three inches in width. They came in many different shapes, with a spout of an inch or two, and could be hung on hooks or long rods, where needed. These lamps used tallow, grease, or oil; a rag, or cotton wick, was inserted which was left to extend from the snout. The old time fat-burning lamps gave off a very unpleasant odor.

Pewter lamps and glass lamps followed the betty lamps. When kerosene (or coal oil) replaced the old fat lamp, there was still the nuisance of a sometimes sickening odor from poorly kept, and poorly trim-



Living Room



Rope Bed

med lights. For a short time there were lights with an asbestos-like wick, giving off a very bright light, but once the "wick" was primed for use it was very fragile and would not stand any jarring or the slightest touch. This lamp was fueled with gasoline, and required an air-pressure to function.

The Care of Fires in the old days was one of importance. We believe it was the housewife's duty to check on the fire-place, covering the embers carefully so the fire would keep all night.

If the fire accidentally extinguished itself, a new one could be kindled by striking a spark with flint and steel, setting fire to cloth, or punk, called tinder.

The use of flint and steel, and some linen, or other tinder to catch the spark, was a very common method. Once a spark was struck it was blown until it flamed up, and was then transferred where needed. All kinds of household linens and cambrics, not needed for various kinds of "patch work" were saved just for helping to "make the fire."

The tinder-box method of making a fire might take upwards of half an hour, so we can see why people didn't want their fires to "go out."

But since not every family had a tinder box, or if they lacked skill enough to start a fire like the Indians, by twirling sticks, then they had to go to a neighbor to "borrow some fire." There weren't any matches.

Neighbors might live several miles apart, and to get fire in those days meant getting up early in the morning. Live coals were carried in a fire pot, which consisted usually of an earthen crock, with a lid, and a handle so that it might be carried with no burning of the hands while heated with live coals.

A layer of ashes was put in the crock first, then live coals, and another layer of ashes to cover, with the lid to keep air out. In this way live coals could be carried for several miles, or for several hours.

For transfer of live coals from one part of a house to another, a shovel, with a lid, was used.

To light a pipe, grandpa or grandma would use a pair of tongues to lift a glowing coal from the fire-place. Rich pine splinters were kept handy to light

the candles. When paper became more plentiful pieces were tightly rolled into 12 to 18 inch lengths, and these became the means of transferring flame from the fire place to pipe, or candle, or fat lamp. These were easily put out, and used again and again, until quite short.

Then Came the Sulphur Matches, the odor of which has lingered in our nostrils for nigh onto three score years! A medium hard wood was sawed across the grain and marked both ways at one end, then separated part way with a knife so that small sticks were still united at the "base." The tips were dipped by hand and to strike these matches one had to have specially coated surfaces, as with the safety match today; and they were in "packs" until separated, one at a time.

We played with some of these old-time matches as late as 1900, although they were then superseded by the red-, white-, or blue-tipped match heads.

ENTERTAINMENT AND INDUSTRY MINGLE AT QUILTING PARTIES

Quiltings. — The sewing of all types of odd shaped patches on large cotton-padded quilts, thus obtaining unusually attractive pieces of the sewer's art, was one of the ways neighbors in small towns and countryside whiled away many a winter day and evening.

A large frame accommodated a cotton material which was padded with cotton batting, and faced with better material. On this was traced, or pinned, more or less with some care and calculation, spaces for a certain number of even or divided designs.

It required many fine stitches, and women, toiling under poor candle or oil lights, worked first at one house and then at another, until quilts for present needs of the family, and for hope chests for coming marriages were quilted in sufficient quantity. The women talked, rolled, ate; rolled, ate and talked.

Patchwork Quilts.—The piecing of odds and ends of odd pieces of all kinds of goods into carefully cut, fitted and sewed designs, is one of those interesting

occupations of old times. Thousands of stitches went into these patchwork quilts, with so many different designs that a census of them would scarcely ever end.

Patchwork being completed, it was laid neatly on the lining, with layers of cotton wadding (or wool) placed between, and the edges basted all around.

Four bars of wood made the quilting frame; about ten feet long, and placed at the four edges, the quilt was sewed to them with strong thread or cord; the bars were crossed and tied firmly at the corners, and the whole of this placed on chairs or tables.

Around this a dozen women could work, sewing and stitching; smoking their pipes and gossiping.

As the work of quilting progressed it was rolled on to the bars at each side, until both sides met.*

The Sampler.—The making of a sampler was something most every young girl was expected to undertake. Most difficult stitches of colored silks and wool, on strong, loosely woven canvas were required.

Samplers usually contained the alphabet of twenty-six letters, but sometimes only twenty-four, omitting the J and U, which were considered minor letters until well after the Revolutionary War. Thus their use was considered optional.

There were worked in fine thread verses of all sorts, of sentimental or religious significance; birds, flowers, scenes and buildings, etc., and generally the name of the person making the sampler, the date and year it was finished. One in possession of the author bears the date 1750.

Papyrotamia was the name for another pastime requiring a bit of skill. It consisted of cutting various designs from stiff paper with a scissors. Occasionally specimens are found in old books, Bibles, etc. Old valentines may have been evolved in this fashion.

Musical Instruments which found much favor in the early days were the zither, dulcimer and the dudels-sock, instruments brought here from the old world.

* Interesting examples of designs may be seen in "Pennsylvania German Quilts," by Marie Knorr Graeff, and "Pennsylvania German Coverlets," by Guy F. Reinert. (Pub. by Mrs. C. Naaman Keyser. \$1 each).

Neither are now very popular, or easy to find in good working condition. The zither, or zitter, as it is called by some, may be found on occasion in parts of eastern Pennsylvania; but hardly ever the dudelsack; and one goes to the mountains of Kentucky or Tennessee to hear the dulcimer.

Singings. — Much of the social life in town and country was spent in "singing parties." With piano, at the dawn of the century, on back through the organ period, singings were most enjoyable affairs. Always a few of each sex could sing perhaps a shade better than others, and thus there was always the urge to make harmony.

Again, at such times the sexes would mingle, telling stories, later getting up to the point of playing all sorts of games, not neglecting kissing.

Kisses were usually short and snappy, and as teeth-brushing was for the most part little heard-of, intimate kissing was too messy, or too "tasty"—some one has called it "schmecklich."

Such parties were irregular in meeting, and in duration, meeting as the mood suggested, and breaking up in the wee hours, when sleep more or less crept up on the participants, or when the older folks, long since gone to bed, objected to too much late carousing.

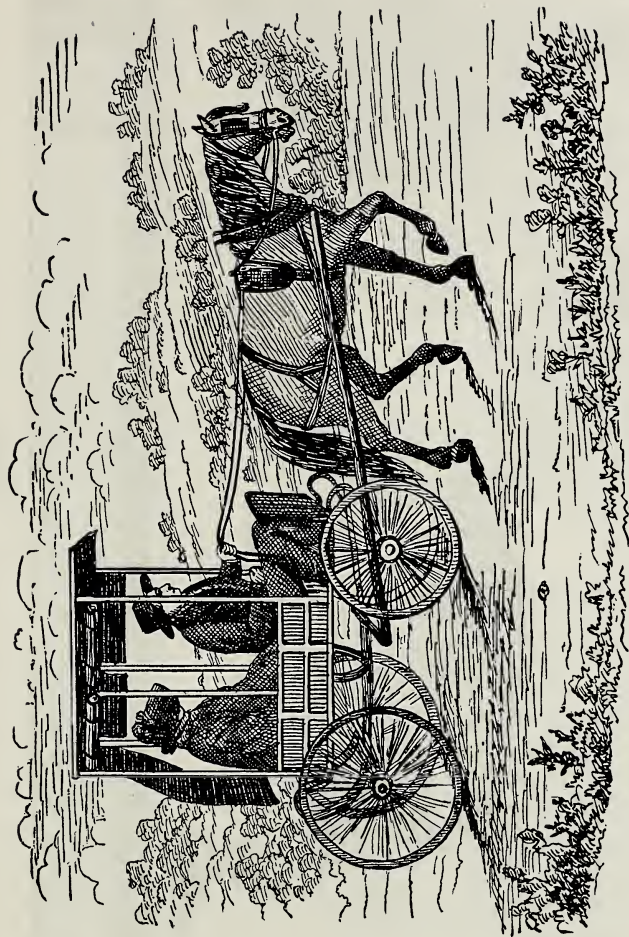
The Old Dances were one form of entertainment which never happened to be a part of our early life activities. Dances were less the rule in our particular neighborhood.

Party groups would get up dances at hotels, or barns, or private homes, but dances in public halls were few and far between in the old days.

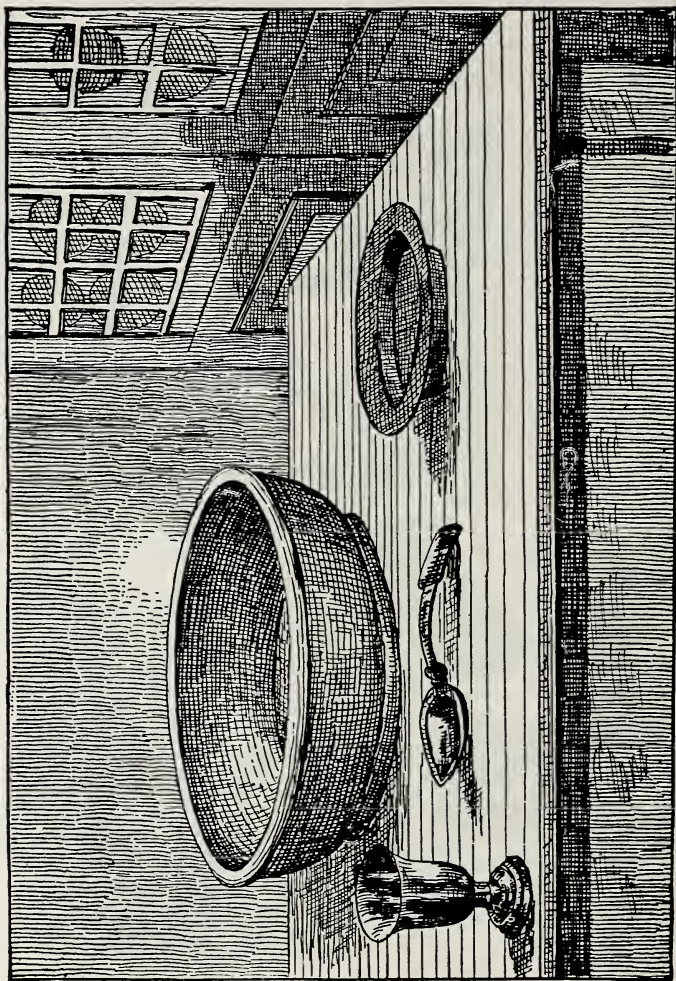
The Traveling Merchant. — Homes, whether in town or country at the turn of the century had a generous supply of the necessary furnishings. Not long before and following the Civil War things were different and people got along pretty well with less.

While they were able to buy about all they needed right from the general store with which they dealt, there were itinerant merchants who came around from time to time more or less on a schedule.

These fellows (Turks, Armenians, Jews or Gen-



Old Time Buggy



Tinware

tiles) might do business from a well-stocked bag on their back or they might travel with a horse and buggy or wagon. Many of them became the great merchandising men in big cities in after years. But they got their start from practically nothing by going out to the people and learning their wants—adding to their stock and living within a meager means until they could open stores in towns or cities. Big business nearly always started from small beginnings.

"Snipe Shooting."—In the unwarranted practice of doing the forbidden things we find a boy and adult "shooting snipes"—picking from the streets and gutters all kinds and bits of tobacco so that it might be smoked in home-made wrappers or pipes. Hoboes did that too, and they added one snipe after another to snipes already collected in a pouch carried for the purpose.

It was the general belief that it was a commodity which was sold to tobacco processors and which again reached the public in chewing tobacco, etc. Remember the knife the merchant used to cut plug chewing-tobacco in full or fractional-sized blocks?

Remember the tobacco-spitting contests—who could spit the greatest distance or hit a mark?

Remember the tobacco-stained teeth and the stains at the corners of the mouth?

Remember the fellows who could always blow the perfect smoke rings? We wonder where they are and what they are doing now.

Bicycles as we know them today made their appearance after the questionable success of the ones with the big wheel in front followed with a small trailer. It wasn't too difficult for youngsters to get the balance necessary to ride a common "bike" but it was much tougher to "get going" on the older Star or Columbia big-wheelers.

Home-made bob-sleds or factory-made single carrier sleds vied with one another for speed or distance.

In those days home-made flat-bottom boats were about all one would see in broad streams or ponds; their primary use was in fishing.

Flying in those days was confined to ballooning, but

30 Home Life of the Pennsylvania Germans

youngsters used umbrellas for parachutes in jumping from roofs or barn doors.

Women Pipe Smokers.—There must be some place in a work of this nature to pay some sort of tribute to those long-livers we knew as "Grandmammy pipe-smokers."

They say such habits have always been common to the Negro women of the South, but we recall quite respectable old women of our own kind who were hardly ever without a lighted pipe of tobacco in their hands or mouth.

We remember the white and dark clay and home-made and factory-made corn-cob variety. Occasionally we read in the papers of centenarian women who attribute long years of life to "pipe-smoking!" These old women always seemed as friendly as did others who never smoked.

There was possibly a period of two score years during which this indulgence was almost entirely gone from the domestic scene, but now——

PHASES OF HOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE NOT RELISHED BY THINKERS

Prayer Service for the entire family as once noted seems to have gone pretty much the way of the candles. Not that there isn't family worship in many homes—there is; there are many families among the "plain people" where they will bend the knee together in prayer as regular as the day follows the night—but it has been discontinued in so many other homes.

Recollections of Old Revival Meetings come to our mind. There were groups of all ages who walked several miles to attend the religious manifestation of regeneration and reconsecration! The visitors attended more out of curiosity than sincerity; they wanted to see who would be the next to confess their sins; who would "go forward" and "get happy."

The old-time revivals were followed by the well-known "saw-dust trail."

Sunday School and Church Activities as they concern the younger element were many—too many for

an account as brief as this must be. Boys and girls used certain services as trysting places, as a screen for meeting for purposes not designed by the leaders and elders of the church! Lots of fun was hatched in the midst of a grave sermon concerning the souls that surely were going to go to hell, or during the hymn singing when some women would be crying as though their hearts were breaking. With children as with horses—you can “drive them to water but you can’t make them drink it!”

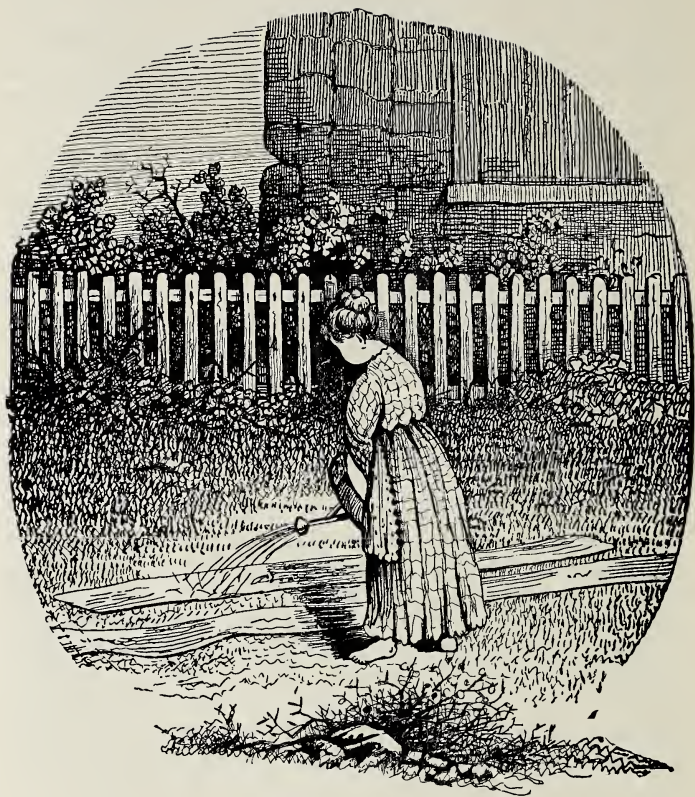
Cemeteries were for specific purposes but they also were playgrounds for kids of school age, as quite often the school yard and burial ground adjoined. Schools and churches grew up side by side in many places.

The sacred acre furnished many an hour of reminiscing, not overlooking the the conjecture of just where the Indians were buried—and the oldest grave.

There was always some reverence shown for the markers erected over the graves of Civil War soldiers and more lately those identified as Revolutionary soldiers. It seems an everlasting shame in the name of civilization that after all these years we must still increase the boundaries of our hallowed ground for burials of millions of men and women who must be listed as having fought for, and possibly died, in the cause which their country’s leaders thought was right and just! As a veteran we sometimes sit and wonder and ponder the seriousness of these matters.

“Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child” was taken literally by many a father. Do you suppose it hurt parents more than it did children, to get a whaling, as the saying had it? Grandparents hated to see their own grandchildren whipped and many times dissuaded a father or mother from using the switch.

There were very few families in those days who didn’t have a switch, paddle or stick handy in the kitchen, especially if boys were in the family. Fathers “burned” the seat of the britches with a good bare hand; mothers used the switch around the calves of the legs, and teachers used the ruler over the palm of the hand. Of course the mouth was always subject to a good whack—a “quickie,” you might call it.



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